

# Wishing You a Joyful and Healthy Christmas

---



I always considered myself fortunate, growing up in Easton. Most of my relatives were within a 20-minute drive, meaning we gathered together over the holidays, often at my childhood home.

My cousins, siblings and I eagerly tore into our stockings as soon as our parents allowed us. We added all the leaves to the table so we could sit together and feast. We sang the "Twelve Days of Christmas" as a family. As my siblings and I got older, we began attending midnight services at Jesse Lee United Methodist Church. Throughout the month of December, we'd see the nativity scene come out.

Each week, a new advent candle would be lit. And finally, at midnight services, we would each hold a candle and sing "Joy to the World." All those traditions I associate with Christmas are no-nos in 2020. It goes without saying that this year will be different. I'll be home for Christmas ... 2021?

After spending this summer in Easton, I've relocated to New York and decided against coming back to Easton for the holiday. Even with a pandemic raging, New York is beautiful at Christmastime, and we recently got a dusting of snow to top it off. My celebratory surroundings almost take the edge off of the disappointment that it just isn't

safe for me to be home right now.

It would be easy to lament Christmas as yet another thing 2020 has taken away from me. But I'd rather take this moment to be an opportunity not just to feel melancholy but also to remember that there is more to come. Fundamentally, Christmas is the story of a birth — and a lonely one at that. I think the pandemic has been a lonely, yet occasionally rewarding rebirth for many of us. Who will I be when this pandemic ends?

It's a question I've pondered a lot lately, with news of vaccines coming. I'm sure there will be things about my quarantine Christmas I'll be missing this time next year: the solitude of being in my apartment with a cup of tea, the calm in not having to worry about how I'll be getting home and when.

Maybe you've joined me in finding new hobbies to take up this year or in reaching out to friends you've fallen out of contact with to catch up. I hope that my post-pandemic self continues to value these things.

Easton, I hope you celebrate Christmas — and any other holiday you observe — safely this winter. I will miss the warmth of being home this year, for sure. But we will emerge from this strange time eventually, and when we do, you can be sure I'll be back home to celebrate.

Until then, my Courier colleagues and I wish you safe, joyful holidays and peace and good health for years to come.